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Reviews

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Reviews

Abstract

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JACK: C.S. Lewis and His Times. George Sayer. Reviewed by Glen GoodKnight.

The 1989 J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar. Roger Garland. Reviewed by Glen GoodKnight.

Exploration of a Drowned Landscape. Charles Thomas. Reviewed by Pat Reynolds.

The Temple of Sulis at Bath. Barry Cunliffe and Peter Davenport. Reviewed by Pat Reynolds.

The Princess and the Goblin. George MacDonald. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

George MacDonald: The Seeking Heart. Kathy Triggs. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

Reviews

A Superb Hobbit

Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Annotated Hobbit*, Introduction and Notes by Douglas Anderson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1988), 337 pp., ISBN 0-395-47690-9.

What a treasure trove; what a superb delight! Now, a year after the 50th anniversary of *The Hobbit*, we have the most interesting and complete edition of them all. Yes, there are annotations to the text, from light entries such as what is mead, and the etymology of *attecrap*, to quotes from Tolkien's letters and complete poems that shed further light on the meaning of the text. There are also references to contemporary children's stories of the time that may have influenced elements in the story such as *The Marvelous Land of Snergs*, and George MacDonald's children's stories. At last, we have a picture of the postcard and its artist, Josef Madlener, which was the inspiration of the origin of Gandalf (see *Mythlore* 34, page 22).

The book has much more to recommend it. The Introduction gives a detailed history of the writing and publication of *The Hobbit*. Appendix A: Textual and Revisional Notes, gives all the textual revisions (far more than one would guess), including misprints and errors, and lists them edition by edition. For those who have wanted to know how the first edition dealt with Gollum giving Bilbo the Ring, the text is here in full. Anderson says "I have attempted to ... have a text which as perfectly as possible represents Tolkien's final intended form." Appendix B: On Runes and Their Values, gives a chart of the Runes' values, and mentions Paul Nolan Hyde's article in *Mythlore* 50 on the subject. The Bibliography has four parts. First there is a list of all published book by Tolkien, then a list of translations of *The Hobbit* in 24 other languages, followed by General Bibliography of related books and articles, concluding with a description of The Mythopoeic Society.

I have left one of the major delights of the book for last: the photographs and illustrations, which are scattered profusely throughout the book. We have a picture of Tolkien in the 1930s, the desk on which he wrote *The Hobbit*, the house he lived in at the time, his daughter Priscilla as a young girl, and others. For some, the illustrations from the dust jackets, editions, and foreign translations will be the primary focus of interest. It is true that most of the foreign illustrations – but happily not all – are technically and artistically embarrassing, nevertheless the cumulative effect is rich and fascinating.

Douglas Anderson proves how love of the material can transform careful scholarship and research into a crea-

tive and invaluable addition to the text itself. All who love Tolkien's writing will treasure this book.

Glen GoodKnight

A New Look at Jack

Sayer, George, *JACK: C.S. Lewis and His Times* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 278 + xvii pp. + 8 pp. photos, ISBN 0-06-067072.

Popular interest in both Lewis and Tolkien goes through waves and cycles. I recall a trough in interest in Tolkien during the 70s until the publication of *The Silmarillion*, compared to the high interest in the mid and late 60s. Since *The Silmarillion*, and all the many other volumes that have flowed from the ongoing hard work of Christopher Tolkien, there has been a renewed interest in Tolkien. It is now more intense and substantial, with less of the cultic trappings and literary opprobrium we saw twenty years ago. Interest in Lewis has seen several troughs since his *The Screwtape Letters* made him popularly known in the 40s. Currently there is a growing and renewed interest in him which demonstrates, among other things, how the "permanent things" both these men wrote of will continue to speak to and enliven future generations.

This new biography by George Sayer, very probably the best one written, comes at a time that should enrich and deepen the current interest in Lewis. It has been very carefully researched, being a work of an attentive and thorough man, who was a pupil of Lewis in the 30s and a good friend until his death. The writing is calm and knowledgeable, yet frequently moving in how he treats the material, having been a personal witness of much of Lewis' life. We are treated to new insights and information about some of the most important and debated people and events in Lewis' life: his father Albert – especially the effect of his death on Jack, Mrs. Moore – who comes across much less of an ogress as she has been previously depicted, and Joy Davidman – the intruder who Jack came to truly love. There is good coverage of Lewis' books, often with little known background information, and of the Inklings. The parts on Tolkien, his influence and interaction with Jack, provide an even more finely tuned sense of what their relationship was like. I could say a great deal more – Williams, Oxford, Lewis' last days – all to praise a book which will take its rightful place in Lewisiana. It is the kind to be read alone slowly in a quiet place, to savour the insight it gives.

Glen GoodKnight

Tolkien through a Skewed Filter

The 1989 J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar, featuring all original art by Roger Garland (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988) ISBN: 0-345-35554-7.

The new Tolkien Calendar was in the major bookstores before Labor Day. To get it out early has been the marketing practice for a number of years now, presumably to give it as much selling time as possible before January 1 makes it a commercial dead letter. To say this year's offering is better than last year's bottom is as true as saying flu is better than pneumonia. But who wants the flu when we might have the chance of breathing a fresh breeze blowing from Middle-earth. The sad ongoing state of Tolkien Calendars for several years shows little sign of remedy with this year's offering.

We have seen the work of Roger Garland before, since his first appearance in the 1984 Calendar, and most of us have received his art with strong reservations, but now we have a second entire Calendar from his hand and can focus on his interpretations again. He did have help, in the way of interior graphic design by "Alex Jay/Studio J," but would have been somewhat better off without it. The borders have a trendy late geometric art deco motif – more at home in the ambience of the experimentally confused 70s, and far, far removed from Tolkien's tone and style. The colors assigned to them – vermilion, non-descript yellow and pastel blue on a background of buff-cream, create a glitzy, inappropriate background that fails to harmonize with the colors of the art itself.

Garland seems to be influenced more by renaissance landscape art from Italy and Holland – with touches of H. Bosch – than by reading what Tolkien had to say. His two greatest faults are his failure to digest Tolkien's geography and a technical coldness in his art. His piece "Moria" has what looks like the Tower of Orthanc on the left – an impossibility from Tolkien's map. The Shire in "Hobbiton" is strewn with craggy hills and mountains, showing quaint architecture beyond the hobbits' technical skill. The "Falls of Rauros" is so geographically and geologically improbable that it fails to suspend disbelief. His "Pelargir and River Anduin" is more impossible. The city is located where the river meets the sea – not more than a hundred miles upriver as Tolkien's map shows. And where are the many channels the River breaks into at its mouth, or where did the huge mountains coming down to the sea a few miles distant come from? The mind boggles and asks whether we are seeing scenes from Middle-earth, or some quaint italianate scenes from another unrelated universe? This cold italianateness is seen in the static "Smaug," "The Havens of Morionde," and especially in "The Fall of Gondolin" which belongs to the style of the High Middle Ages with its architecture and gaggle of diverse dragons. Garland prefers a skewed cold technical skill over warmth and human feeling in most of his art. I say most, because there are two (almost three) pieces that merit praise: "Old Man

Willow" and "Luthien in the Woods of Neldoreth" each in their own way capture either charm or awe. His treatment of trees is especially good here. The third "The Return of the Shadow" suffers from too many diverse elements crowded into one picture.

Of course each artist will have his or her own vision and interpretation, but why is it that something by Kirk, Wynne, DiSanto or Beach, to name a few, can still be recognized as *Tolkien*? Why do we have a showcase of someone that fails to do this most of the time? Judging from the art by Ted Nasmith, especially from his very impressive work displayed at the 1987 Mythopoeic Conference and his works in the 1988 Calendar, I look forward to seeing his work showcased in a calendar of his own.

Glen GoodKnight

Avalon and Aqua Sulis:

Two Places for Future Arthurian Research

Charles Thomas, *Exploration of a Drowned Landscape*, (Batsford, London, 1985) and Barry Cunliffe and Peter Avenport, *The Temple of Sulis at Bath*, (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology: Volume 1 Monograph No. 7, Oxford 1985; Volume 2 Monograph No. 16, 1988.)

These two recently published archaeological texts have things to say which may interest researchers of Arthurian myths.

Exploration of a Drowned Landscape is a delightfully written, comprehensive study of the Scilly Isle. This group of islands (rather unfortunately pronounced "silly") have only recently become islands. As recently as the Norman period they were effectively a single isle, and only received their current form by the early Tudor period. The book makes a detailed study of the place names of the islands. One (now three) is called Arthur's Island, and Thomas therefore considers the question "Was Scilly Island Avalon?" as well as exploring the more conventional identification of Scilly with the drowned land of Lyonesse. The name "Scilly" has a different etymology. Thomas argues for its origin lying with a West British deity, "Scully" or "Sulis." The U representing the high mid vowel still heard in North Welsh (where South Welsh uses the high front vowel).

The Second volume of Barry Cunliffe's *The Temple of Sulis at Bath* has just been published. This is a report of the excavation of a Romano-British Temple complex at Bath, Avon. It contains a discussion of Sulis, to whom the temple was dedicated. Sulis was "attached," as so many provincial gods and goddesses were, to a Roman deity: in Sulis case, to Minerva, goddess of wisdom and healing, and prominent member of the pantheon. However, Cunliffe argues that is not necessarily a goddess: and that it is probable that Sulis was a god. The central position given to the gorgon's head on the pediment of the temple leads Cun-

liffe to say that "we are clearly dealing with a symbol whose significance is enhanced well beyond its conventional meaning."

Thomas argues, I think convincingly, that Sulis Minerva and Sulis of Scilly are one and the same. He points out that the "Dinsol" mentioned in the life of the Cornish Saint Cadoc is possibly St. Michael's Mount, an intermediate site, the name being "din" = *stronghold, fortified place*, "sol" = *Sulis*. The British Section of the Ravenna Cosmography has an island called *Minerve* — possibly Minerva's Island, and if so confirming that Sulis of Scilly is the Sulis Minerva.

This raises several questions. First, can anything be deduced about the characteristics of the god Sulis, worshipped at both Bath and Scilly, and second, how does Arthur relate to this?

Cunliffe sees Sulis as a sun-god, his name being related to the modern Welsh "haul" = *sun* (Welsh has H where British has S, e.g. "hafren"/"sabrina" = *River Severn*). Incidentally, J.R.R. Tolkien was the first to establish that Sulis was the nominative form of the name, and it could not, therefore, be a variant of the Latin "sol" = *sun*. The temple has a perpetual fire, which consumed coal. Thomas interprets a Latin name for Land's End, *Antivestaeum* as meaning "opposite to the hearth/beacon." He suggests that the site may have been on St. Martin's. Thomas points out that the vowel in the *sul-* of Scilly is short, whereas Sulis (Minerva) may have had a long vowel. He traces the etymology of the Scilly "sul-" to a Celtic verbal stem behind the modern Welsh "syllu" = *to gaze or stare at*. He thus sees the Scilly god(dess) as "(s)he who looks out" or "the watcher god(dess)."

But the most important thing about Sulis at Bath to my mind is that he is a *water* god. Here hot sulfurous springs were known to the Romans as "Waters of Sulis." Scilly has no such springs, they are exceedingly rare in Britain, but the waters around the islands bubble and boil like a caldron. Thomas argues that the waterspouts, occasionally seen in this area were interpreted as manifestations of the god(dess). I suggest, therefore, that in both locations, Sulis was a god of angry, cloudy water.

Arthur's Scilly connection has already been mentioned. The Bath connection is that *Mons Badonicus* could be Bathampton, and Iron Age hillfort near Bath.

Since we have a possible matching of Avalon/Sulis Sanctuary, and a possible correlation of Mon Badonicus/Aquae Sulis, I would go on to ask if Arthur and Sulis are associated. Arthur is known to have attracted the legends of other heroes, and perhaps he incorporates some of the elements of Sulis. Arthur is not particularly associated with water, but various magical lakes are noted in the early literature: there is the underground lake of Nennius' *History of the British* (xlii 41-42), and three strange pools are mentioned in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain* (ix.7). There is, of course, one ves-

sel particularly associated with Arthur, if this road is followed, one could make a wild identification of Bath as the Holy Grail!

NOTE: ¹ Collingwood and Myres *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1937, p.264.

Pat Reynolds

The Most Real Story

George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*, illustrated by Jessie Willcox Smith, originally published in Philadelphia by David McKay Company, 1920 and reprinted in Books of Wonder (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), Afterword by Peter Glassman, 208 pp. ISBN 0-688-06604-6.

G.K. Chesterton wrote of *The Princess and the Goblin* in his Introduction to Greville MacDonald's biography, *George MacDonald and His Wife* (1924) that "of all the stories I have read... it remains the most real, the most realistic, in the exact sense of the phrase the most life like." Princess Irene in her castle halfway up a mountain with its caverns beneath full of goblins and its tower above containing a very great Lady with her fire of roses and her busy spinning wheel, depicts the human condition in all its depths and heights, Chesterton thought. He also said he thought he knew who that Lady was.

I was lucky enough to find the book containing these words in a Fourth Avenue bookstore in New York in 1959, but I was even luckier than that, because I first read *The Princess and the Goblin* in 1938 when I was eight years old, and it remains the central element in the formation of my psychic life. What I did not remember until I found the present volume, a superb reprint of the 1920 edition with its eight glorious full color illustrations by one of its great American illustrators trained at Howard Pyle's Brandywine School, Jessie Willcox Smith, was that those illustrations entirely formed my visual memory of the book. I have read it over and over since, including versions with the original and marvellous late Victorian black and white illustrations by Arthur Hughes which appeared in 1871 (dated 1872), but when I saw these beautiful images I knew I have found the version I first read back home in Carbondale, Illinois! And where did I find this wonderful reprint? In Seattle, Washington, were I participated in a C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton conference and heard an excellent paper by Paul Ford on "The Influence of George MacDonald on Chesterton and Lewis." I walked into a suburban bookstore and there it was: how's that for synchronicity?

This edition, exquisitely, lovingly reproduced, and completed in every particular, with no abridgement or other disastrous attempt to improve upon MacDonald's matchless masterpiece, and a thoughtful Afterword for adult readers is the ideal version for readers of *Mythlore*. Of all the literary gifts I have in my power to give, recom-

mending this particular version of this particular book to new readers gives me the greatest pleasure, and anybody who already knows and loves MacDonald will love it too. From the very first line – "There was once a little princess" – to the very last – "Somehow, stories won't finish. I think I know why, but I won't say that either, now" – this is the loveliest children's book even written, with the possible exception of a certain series which begins with "Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy" and ends with "now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read; which goes on for ever; in which every chapter is better than the one before." And he called George Macdonald his master.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

Mr. Great Heart

Kathy Triggs, *George Macdonald: The Seeking Heart* (Basington, UK: Pickering, 1984), 95pp. ISBN 0-7208-0559-7.

C.S. Lewis called George Macdonald his spiritual mentor, and made him the Virgil of his guide to the after-life, *The Great Divorce*. Most readers of *Mythlore* know Macdonald also for his great adult and children's fantasies – *Phantastes*, *Lilith*, and *At the Back of the North Wind*, *The Princess and the Goblin*, and *The Princess and Curdie*. Others may know his shorter or longer fairy tales as well, and a few may have read one or more of his numerous novels, most of them set in Scottish locales. The quality of "holiness" which Lewis recognized in his first encounter with *Phantastes* permeates all of Macdonald's works.

That quality shines through this exquisite little life of Macdonald. Roughly matching his lifetime (1825-1905) with that of the Victorian era, he wrestled with major religious concerns of the nineteenth century – the excesses of Scottish Calvinism, the plight of the poor, religious doubt, biblical criticism, and the conflict (not a problem for him) between religion and science – and ended his days in the Church of England. Matters of such great moment are treated with remarkable clarity in this little volume. Readers who want to know what a life lived in the full confidence of a loving God is like, can find out from Kathy Triggs's biography of Macdonald in a quiet afternoon's reading, an experience which is highly recommended.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

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NEWS NOTE:

The Marion E. Wade Center, noted for its collection of materials on Owen Barfield, G.K.Chesterton, C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, Dorothy L. Sayers, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams, located at Wheaton College in Wheaton Illinois has recently announced it has acquired from the Anthony Fleming Estate the Dorothy L. Sayers Papers. The collection is massive. It includes letters to and from Miss Sayers, and the correspondence alone numbers over 30,000 pages. Mythopoeic Society members are welcome to visit and do research at the Center, but it is suggested you inquire as to open and closed schedules before planning a trip. — from a letter from Lyle Dorsett, Curator.

Tolkien Journal

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by Patrick Wynne

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